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Cover artwork: Somerset Bean

Words to live by

Every time we witness an injustice and do not act, we train our character to be passive in its presence and thereby eventually lose all ability to defend ourselves and those we love. In a modern economy it is impossible to seal oneself off from injustice.

If we have brains or courage, then we are blessed and called on not to frit these qualities away, standing agape at the ideas of others, winning pissing contests, improving the efficiencies of the neocorporate state, or immersing ourselves in obscuranta, but rather to prove the vigor of our talents against the strongest opponents of love we can find.

* * *

You have to start with the truth. The truth is the only way that we can get anywhere. Because any decision-making that is based upon a lie or ignorance can't lead to a good conclusion.
— *Julian Assange*

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common ground

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Publications Mail Agreement No. 4001171
Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to
Circulation Dept., Head office
ISSN No. 0824-0698

Head Office

Common Ground Publishing Corp.
3152 West 8th Ave.
Vancouver, BC V6K 2C3

Reach Common Ground's great audience

Over 200,000 readers per issue.
Survey shows 3 - 4 readers/copy, plus online at
www.commonground.ca and our Facebook link.

100% owned and operated by Canadians.
Published 10 times a year in Canada.

Annual subscription is \$75 (US\$75) for one year (12 issues). Single issues are \$6 (specify issue #). Payable by cheque, Visa, MasterCard, Interac or money order.

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An impossible cause, now seems possible.
My people will be free.
— *Benny Wenda, West Papua*

History is long, but know that justice will prevail.
— *Archbishop Desmond Tutu*

There is no passion to be found...in settling for a life this is less than the one you are capable of living. It always seems impossible until it is done.
— *Nelson Mandela*

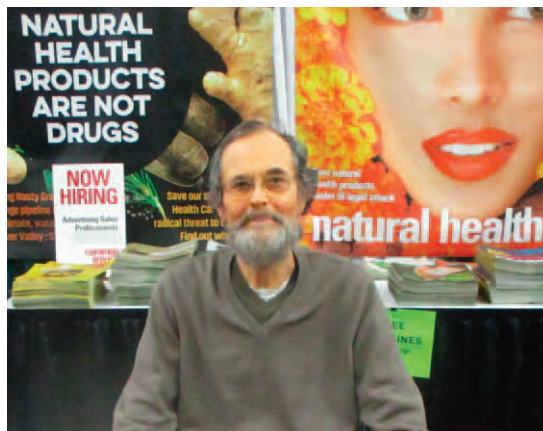
Surviving cancer against all odds

by Michael Abel

Health Canada is in the process of updating regulatory frameworks governing natural health products (NHPs). According to the Natural Health Products Protection Association, current regulations will be repealed or amended so that natural products are regulated in the same way as chemical non-prescription drugs (<https://bit.ly/2OuTktQ>). As a result, some NHPs may only be available at higher cost or not available at all. This will impact people who are using NHPs to treat cancer and other illnesses.

Common Ground invited me to discuss my prostate cancer healing journey at the Victoria Health show. I talked to people about *Radical Remission: Surviving Cancer Against All Odds* by Dr. Kelly A. Turner. Dr. Turner studied over 1,000 cases of cancer remission. She found that there were nine key factors among the 75 things people did to achieve a complete reversal of their serious or terminal cancer diagnosis. Using herbs and supplements is one of those nine key factors. One reason I am alive is because I am taking my naturopathic doctors' recommended herbs and supplements.

Another great information source is *Naturopathic Oncology: An Encyclopedic Guide for Patients & Physicians*, by Dr. Neil McKinney, a world leader in natural



Michael Abel at the *Common Ground* booth.

integrative cancer care. McKinney's book is a wealth of study, practice and research with many scientifically indexed facts about cancer. After reading his book, Dr. McKinney advises getting "expert guidance from a licensed, accountable, health professional team experienced in treating cancer."

At the Victoria Health Show, I attended an inspiring talk by Jason Watkin of Purica, entitled *When East Meets West*. Jason used his knowledge of western science and eastern traditions to clearly show how the mind affects health. After his talk, I asked Jason if I could say a few

words. I told him about my blood tests where two different ratios had improved. However, if I experienced significant stress before the blood tests, the ratios went in the wrong direction. Seeing the actual results made me decide to do more about handling stress.

Reading Eckhart Tolle's *A New Earth* is helping me – in particular *The Breath*, on page 243, where Tolle says "being aware of your breathing takes attention away from thinking and creates space."

In early 2012, doctors decided I was not a good candidate for surgery, chemo or radiation therapy. Instead, they prescribed four years of hormone treatment followed by two years of radiation in order to live seven more years. I declined this because I have a history of serious depression. Hormone treatment can cause depression. I was told I would be dead in five years. On December 21, 2019, I enjoyed and celebrated my 80th birthday with close family members in Victoria. **K**

To read more, google: Michael Abel Cancer. You will find a fundraising website originally set up by his daughter Jenny Abel. The site has also become a way of sharing information. Updates 70 and 66 offer suggestions on how to stop Health Canada from restricting access to Natural Health Products.

The above is for information only. For medical advice, consult your professional health team.



Nutrispeak Vesanto Melina

HEALTH

Tips on going plant-based

Have you been considering a shift to a plant-based diet? Does a sudden leap to an entirely vegan diet seem overwhelming? How about a whole day of vegan meals? Every plant-based choice you make helps the environment, animals and your health – provided it is composed of whole foods. Here are a few tips on moving gradually and smoothly in a plant-based direction.

A simple but impactful choice is switching what you pour over your morning cereal. Have you ever noticed those muscular young men in the grocery store with almond milk and ground beef in their shopping carts? Clearly not vegans, they are, like millions of others, opting for soy, almond, coconut, cashew, hemp, oat and other non-dairy milks instead of dairy. In fact, so many people are making this switch that America's two biggest milk producers, Borden and Dean Foods, have recently filed for bankruptcy. Fortified varieties of non-dairy milks feature as much calcium and vitamin D as dairy milk.

When meal planning, it is natural and reassuring

to gravitate toward a small list of lifelong favourites. However, in making a switch, we often discover we already have in our repertoire several meals we love that are entirely plant-based, or could be with minor changes. If your family's occasional bean-based meal is unappealing, recognize there are over 20 types of beans, peas, lentils and soyfoods commonly used in delicious cuisines worldwide. You are entering a new world! Make a point of exploring vegetables, grains, nuts, seeds, legumes, and fruits you have never tasted, and gradually expand your repertoire by trying a new dish every week.

Online groups such as Vancouver Vegans on Facebook can be a helpful resource for recommendations regarding local foods and restaurants. For face-to-face support, join a group such as Meatless Meetup (www.meetup.com/MeatlessMeetup). With over 4400 members, the group holds events all over the Lower Mainland. Explore their potlucks, restaurant meals, festivals, films, speaker events, and nutrition tours. Meatless Meetup is not aimed solely at vegetarians and vegans, or

those attempting to become vegetarian or vegan. While their dining events are vegan, the group also welcomes those who simply want to eat more plant-based meals.

If you prefer to eat at home, an inexpensive (\$20 US) online cooking series is available at www.bravopb.com/. Chef Ramses Bravo teaches fingertip-saving knife skills and health-supportive food preparation. This excellent series is available and affordable for everyone. **K**

Vesanto Melina is author of award winning books on plant-based nutrition and foods. nutrispeak.com, becomingvegan.ca and kickdiabetescookbook.com.

EVENTS

Meet Vesanto Melina at the Zoomer Show March 7 & 8, Vancouver Convention Centre. www.zoomershow.com/vancouver/attend/
Meatless Meetup mini-potlucks, at Vancouver Co-Housing, 1733 E. 33rd Ave. Vancouver **February 15, 6:30 pm** – Dessert Potluck Buffet! Love & the Plant Based Diet
March 14, 5 pm – Talk on Athletic Performance & the Vegan Diet. Info: www.meetup.com/MeatlessMeetup



Fifty weeks in prison for violating his bail: Julian Assange in January 2020 in a police van on the way to London's maximum security Belmarsh prison. Dominic Lipinski/Press Association Images/Keystone

David Morales, the indicted owner of the Spanish private security firm Undercover Global, is being investigated by Spain's high court for allegedly providing the CIA with audio and video recordings of the meetings WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange had with his attorneys and other visitors when the publisher was in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London. The security firm also reportedly photographed the passports of all of Assange's visitors. It is accused of taking visitors' phones, which were not permitted in the embassy, and opening them, presumably in an effort to intercept calls. It reportedly stole data from laptops, electronic tablets and USB sticks, all required to be left at the embassy reception area. It allegedly compiled detailed reports on all of Assange's meetings and conversations with visitors. The firm even is said to have planned to steal the diaper of a baby — brought to visit Assange — to perform a DNA test to establish whether the infant was a secret son of Assange. UC Global, apparently at the behest of the CIA, also allegedly spied on Ecuadorian diplomats who worked in the London embassy.

The probe by the court, the Audiencia Nacional, into the activities of UC Global, along with leaked videos, statements, documents and reports published by the Spanish newspaper *El País* as well as the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*, offers a window into the new global security state. Here the rule of law is irrelevant. Here privacy and attorney-client privilege do not exist. Here people live under 24-hour-a-day surveillance. Here all who attempt to expose the crimes of tyrannical power will be hunted down, kidnapped, imprisoned and broken. This global security state is a terrifying

would mean the end of journalistic investigations into the inner workings of power. It would cement into place a terrifying global, corporate tyranny under which borders, nationality and law mean nothing. Once such a legal precedent is set, any publication that publishes classified material, from *The New York Times* to an alternative website, will be prosecuted and silenced.

The flagrant defiance of law and international protocols in the persecution of Assange is legion. In April 2019, Ecuadorian President Lenin Moreno capriciously terminated Assange's right of asylum at the London embassy, where he spent seven years, despite Assange's status as a political refugee. Moreno authorized British police to enter the embassy — diplomatically sanctioned sovereign territory — to arrest a naturalized citizen of Ecuador. (Assange retains his Australian citizenship.) The British police seized Assange, who has never committed a crime, and the British government keeps him imprisoned, ostensibly for a bail violation.

Assange is being held in the notorious high-security HM Prison Belmarsh. He has spent much of his time in isolation, is often heavily sedated and has been denied medical treatment for a variety of physical ailments. His lawyers say they are routinely denied access to their client. Nils Melzer, the United Nations' special rapporteur on torture who examined Assange with two physicians, said Assange has undergone prolonged psychological torture. Melzer has criticized what he calls the "judicial persecution" of Assange by Britain, the United States, Ecuador and Sweden, which prolonged an investigation into a sexual assault case in an effort to extradite Assange to Sweden. Assange said the case was a pretext to extra-

What happened to Assange will happen to the rest of us

by Chris Hedges

<https://defend.wikileaks.org>

melding of the corporate and the public. And what it has done to Assange it will soon do to the rest of us.

The publication of classified documents is not yet a crime in the United States. If Assange is extradited and convicted, it will become one. Assange is not an American citizen. WikiLeaks, which he founded, is not a U.S.-based publication. The extradition of Assange

dite him to the United States. Once Assange was arrested by British police the sexual assault case was dropped.

Melzer says Assange would face a politicized show trial in the United States if he were extradited to face 17 charges under the Espionage Act for his role in publishing classified military and diplomatic cables, documents and videos that exposed U.S. war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan. Each of the counts carries a potential sentence of 10 years, and an additional charge that Assange conspired to hack into a government computer has a maximum sentence of five years. A hearing to determine whether he will be extradited to the United States starts Feb. 24 at London's Woolwich Crown Court. It is scheduled to last about a week and then resume May 18, for three weeks more.



WikiLeaks has done more than any other news organization to expose the abuses of power and crimes of the American empire.

WikiLeaks released U.S. military war logs from Afghanistan and Iraq, a cache of 250,000 diplomatic cables and 800 Guantanamo Bay detainee assessment briefs along with the 2007 "Collateral Murder" video, in which U.S. helicopter pilots banter as they gun down civilians, including children and two Reuters journalists, in a Baghdad street. The material was given to WikiLeaks in 2010 by Chelsea Manning, then Bradley Manning, a low-ranking intelligence specialist in the U.S. Army. Assange has been accused by an enraged U.S. intelligence community of causing "one of the largest compromises of classified information in the history of the United States." Manning was convicted of espionage charges in August 2013 and sentenced to 35 years in a military prison. She was granted clemency in January 2017 by President Barack Obama. Manning was ordered back to prison last year after refusing to testify before a grand jury in the WikiLeaks case, and she remains behind bars. No one was ever charged for the war crimes WikiLeaks documented.

Assange earned the enmity of the *continued p.11...*

From living in public to losing in private

by Geoff Olson

Software license agreements – who reads ‘em anymore? These days, it seems almost perversely old-school to not immediately click “I accept”. On the rare occasions I scroll through these tracts of legalese, I often find the app maker wants approval to get into my contacts, my photos, and the very guts of my phone/tablet/computer. In such cases, I delete the app.

Our Pavlovian willingness to click away our personal privacy comes bundled with our habit of oversharing on social media. And that brings me to a prophetic social experiment that took place two decades ago.

In late 1999, over 100 people agreed to spend 30 days in an underground bunker in the heart of New York City. Each had their own assigned pod, modelled after Japanese-style capsule hotels. The pods were equipped with surveillance cameras and a personal channel in a closed circuit network. Everyone could see everyone else engaging in intimate acts and exchanges. The adventurers even partook in interrogations to reveal the most intimate details of their lives. In this hellish party environment, personal privacy utterly collapsed. Many began to fall apart.

Thinking it was a cult, FEMA police raided the bunker on Jan 1, 2000. On the morning of the new millennium, the participants were set loose into the streets of Manhattan.

This social experiment, captured in the unsettling 2009 film *We Live in Public*, was the brainchild of the eccentric Internet pioneer Josh Harris. He constructed his digital petri dish to investigate how social identity would be constructed in the future. Harris believed we would start using computer technology to publicize our lives and invent virtual selves – while abandoning personal privacy in the process.

Harris’s experiment was a harbinger of the reality TV

craze of the early naughts, which gave us shows like *Big Brother*, *Survivor*, and that incubator for Donald Trump’s 2016 presidential bid, *The Apprentice*. But the experiment also anticipated today’s open-air bunker of networked devices, through which every conceivable dimension of our lives is measured, mapped, tracked and sold.

In 2003, a young Harvard student named Mark Zuckerberg invented “Facemash”, a website for rating the attractiveness of female Ivy League students. Initially, the young Zuckerberg faced expulsion, and was charged with breaching security and violating both copyrights and individual privacy. The charges were dropped. Yet with startup investors, Zuckerberg leveraged his bad habits into a new social networking platform. In short order, millions of people across the world freely handed over their personal information to Facebook for the opportunity to connect with real and ersatz “friends”. The company’s revenue model depended on selling off the harvested metadata to all manner of third parties, and claiming copyright on anything members wrote on Facebook.

Yet “surveillance capitalism” is no longer just limited to smart phones and social media. As of January 2019, there were reportedly nearly 120 million smart speakers in U.S. homes, and increasing numbers of



Surveillance screen of hospital cafeteria. photo © Photographerlondon

consumers signing up for 24-7 domestic penetration by Amazon, Google, Microsoft and Apple.

Ten years ago, if you asked any adult how they’d feel about installing corporate listening devices into their homes, you’d probably hear the alarmed response, “Orwell!” Yet within the space of a decade you’re more likely to hear, “Oh, well...”

To give just one example, I know an intelligent educated couple who paid up for Google Assistant. When I visited their home I make a point of asking, “mind disabling your spy device?” They amicably comply, but on a recent visit they refused. Their Google Assistant, an innocent-looking donut-sized device, was being used to time something in the oven. *Um, don’t ovens come with timers?* I kept mum.

My friends, like so many others, are trading personal privacy for immediate comfort and convenience. But that’s how a slippery slope becomes a slalom course. Often the rationalization comes down to “we have nothing to hide”, but isn’t that welcoming a world in which external parties get to redefine what’s safe to share? (Several years ago, Samsung attached a notification to their smart TVs telling buyers to mind their conversations in the presence of their plugged-in purchases.)

But like everyone else, I find our magic rectangles, big and small, damnably seductive. There is amazingly diverse and creative high-end content on Netflix and other portals and platforms. And yes, social media has its place. Even if, as one writer put it, it has devolved into a “microcelebrity farm tilled by our free labour,” and irrigated by

cont’d pg 14 ...



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BC needs to protect health freedom

by Naida Geisler

In 1984, like-minded Canadians came together and incorporated Health Action Network Society, widely known as HANS. For 36 years, HANS has educated and advocated for holistic, integrative and complementary health practitioners, businesses, and patients.

On December 18, 2019 HANS received a letter from the BC's Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing stating, "The Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch have concluded, through consultation with the Ministry of Health and the Provincial Health Officer, that this content did not conform to the Ministry of Health's Strategic Framework for Immunization in B.C." Nine pieces of vaccine safety information HANS made available to the public over a 10-year period were cited. Puzzling, considering the referenced Strategic Framework has been in place since 2007. HANS has received the grant every year since that framework was implemented and has, as a condition of the funding, disclosed all programming activities annually. Somehow HANS's activities were not considered nonconforming until 2019.

To be clear, HANS is not an anti-vaccine organization. Simply discussing safety components of an issue, be it dentistry or surgery does not make you "anti" anything. The term "anti-vaccine" or "anti-vaxx" is used to shut down the conversation before it begins.

The BC Gaming audit of HANS covered a four-year

time period: 2015 - 2019. Yet in order to build a case against HANS, the auditors had to go back 10 years to produce nine instances of references to vaccines or immunization. They focused on a small part of our programming rather than view our work from a holistic perspective that recognizes

**The CBC's stories were unethically
alarmist and misleading, providing
dramatic headlines and incomplete facts.**

our 36 years of public encouragement of health self-responsibility and individual well-being – all of which deserves government support, if only for health care cost savings. Their letter confirmed that HANS was no longer eligible for the BC Gaming Grant which represents 40 percent of annual funding.

Current Canadian Governments and Health Freedom

On a national level, most of the holistic and complementary health community is aware that Health Canada is quietly, slowly implementing a new Natural Health Product framework that threatens the existence of small manufacturers, practitioners who compound as part of their practice, and those who rely on traditional claims to secure their

Natural Product Number. The initiative is a slow burn we are not supposed to notice, akin to the proverbial frog in a pot of warming water.

What's happening in B.C. is somewhat different. HANS has historically enjoyed an open, communicative dialogue with the provincial governments. Several correspondences between HANS and various provincial politicians who served throughout the 2000s including Gordon Campbell, Mike Harcourt, and others of varying party affiliations, provided supportive, solution-driven, collaborative endorsements of HANS. What's changed? It's certainly not Canadian nor British Columbian demand for therapies or products. In 2017, Canadians spent \$6.5 billion on providers of holistic and complementary therapies. Approximately 65 percent of British Columbians use holistic and complementary therapies. British Columbians are the most health-progressive Canadians, but somehow the provincial government is not respecting these values.

The BC Ministry of Health and the CBC

From April 16, 2018 to July 15, 2019, one CBC British Columbia reporter published at least 21 stories that eroded public confidence in "alternative" health practices. The stories were unethically alarmist and misleading, providing dramatic headlines and incomplete *cont'd pg 9 ...*

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Warrior

Up!

Autumn Peltier alarms an awakening world

by Bruce Mason
photos by Linda Roy

Standing in the international spotlight, Canada's Autumn Peltier is throwing water in the face of humanity, as it sleep-walks toward nightmarish extinction. But the degree to which we will be shocked and awakened to reality depends on comprehending her story, as well as her unique, bracing message.

"It is almost like we don't realize or believe climate change is real," says the 15 year-old chief water commissioner for the Anishinabek, a political advocacy group for 40 First Nations across Ontario. "The focus is on money and I've said it once, and will again: we can't eat it, or drink oil." That is at the core of what she has been sharing in multiple speeches at the United Nations and hundreds of international events as a clean water activist, for half of her young life.

Her work has earned wide-ranging accolades. In 2018, she was awarded the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers by Ontario's Lieutenant Governor, and has lately found herself on rosters of notable people: BBC's 100 most inspiring and influential women; the *Huffington Post*'s "15 Canadian Icons Who Stole our Hearts"; the Union of Concerned Scientists Science Defenders; *Chatelaine*'s "Women of the Year" (2019); and *Maclean's* "20 to Watch in 2020".

Her voice is among the exponentially growing chorus of global youth activists fighting for environmental justice – and chastising so-called leaders for inaction, hypocrisy and ecocide. "I don't want your awards. If you are going to award me, award me with helping to find solutions and helping to make change," she recently told the World Economic Forum's 50th annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland. She was flanked on-stage by fellow teen activists, Greta Thunberg of Sweden, Natasha Mwansa from Zambia and Salvador Gomez-Colon of Puerto Rico.

"Youth are standing up because we're actually experiencing climate change. A lot of us are scared, wondering if we even have a future. Something is wrong if we have to speak up. We should just be, being kids.

"I go through a lot of bullying because of what I do. That's probably the only barrier that's making me not want to do this anymore. But it's essential to show people what we're struggling with and fighting for, yet still not being heard. Maybe we need to have more elders and youth together sitting at the table when decisions are made about our lands and waters."

Autumn Peltier belongs to the Wiikwemkoong



Wiikwemkoong Unceded Reserve
Manitoulin Island



"Water is a basic human right, yet there are children born into a world living off bottled water, delivered to their homes."

First Nation. She lives in unceded territory on Manitoulin Island, the largest freshwater island in the world off the north shore of Lake Huron, quite literally surrounded by the largest group of freshwater lakes on Earth.

At eight years of age, during a water ceremony on a nearby reserve, she recalls: "I went to the washroom, and all over the walls, I read: 'Don't drink, or touch the water,' 'Not for consumption' and 'Boil water advisory.'"

"I had no idea what the warnings meant," Peltier remembers. "I later discovered that water contamination was all across Canada and the world, from Six Nations in the Grand River, to Flint, Michigan and far beyond.

"Water is a basic human right, yet there are children born into a world living off bottled water, delivered to their homes. I can't even imagine what it is like to be dependent on it. No community should be on a boil water advisory. Children shouldn't have to grow up not knowing what it's like to drink from a faucet, or

continued p.13...

Bridal Veil Falls, near Kagawong, Manitoulin Island

Gallery

Howe Sound



Protecting health freedom from pg. 7


facts. Through our publicly funded national broadcaster, the reporter bullied chiropractors, naturopaths, homeopaths, HANS, and federally elected officials. Upon reviewing her stories, I can safely say that never once, with the exception of the federally elected officials, were the subjects of the attacks given the opportunity to defend themselves with more than a mere perfunctory statement.

A strong bias against alternative health practices and products has recently emerged, particularly by the CBC. To be clear, the CBC stories did not indicate a single injury or fatality at the hands of a practitioner or product. Because none exists.

Did this negative media create public pressure that the Ministry of Health used as an opportunity to diminish health freedom in British Columbia? Or did the ministry use the media to manipulate the public into an

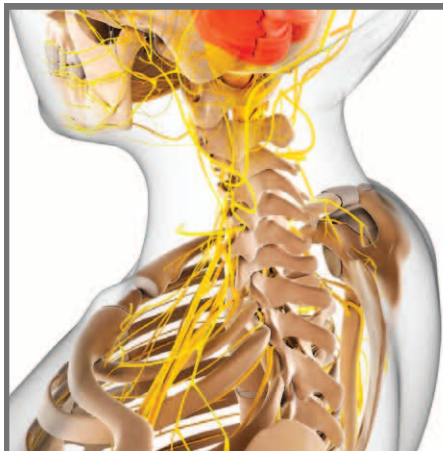
anti-alternative health bias? Health freedom and respect for independent health and wellness choices are no longer encouraged by these institutions. They are barely tolerated.

Ours is a cautionary tale. We, here in Canada, often take our freedoms for granted. If health freedom is important to

you, pay careful attention to how your government, and the media, responds to your demand for more freedom of choice in your health care. 

Naida Geisler is the General Manager of the Health Action Network Society (HANS).

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...Assange from pg. 5

Democratic Party establishment by publishing 70,000 hacked emails belonging to the Democratic National Committee and senior Democratic officials. The emails were copied from the accounts of John Podesta, Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman. The Podesta emails exposed the donation of millions of dollars to the Clinton Foundation by Saudi Arabia and Qatar, two of the major funders of Islamic State. It exposed the \$657,000 that Goldman Sachs paid to Hillary Clinton to give talks, a sum so large it can only be considered a bribe. It exposed Clinton's repeated mendacity. She was caught in the emails, for example, telling the financial elites that she wanted "open trade and open borders" and believed Wall Street executives were best positioned to manage the economy, a statement that contradicted

her campaign statements. It exposed the Clinton campaign's efforts to influence the Republican primaries to ensure that Donald Trump was the Republican nominee. It exposed Clinton's advance knowledge of questions in a primary debate. It exposed Clinton as the principal architect of the war in Libya, a war she believed would burnish her credentials as a presidential candidate.

Journalists can argue that this information, like the war logs, should have remained hidden, but they can't then call themselves journalists.

The Democratic and Republican leaders are united in their crusade to extradite and sentence Assange. The Democratic Party, which has attempted to blame Russia for its election loss to Trump, charges that the Podesta emails were obtained by Russian government hackers. However, James Comey, the former FBI director, has

conceded that the emails were probably delivered to WikiLeaks by an intermediary, and Assange has said the emails were not provided by "state actors."

WikiLeaks has done more than any other news organization to expose the abuses of power and crimes of the American empire. In addition to the war logs and the Podesta emails, it made public the hacking tools used by the CIA and the National Security Agency and their interference in foreign elections, including French elections. It disclosed the internal conspiracy against British Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn by Labour members of Parliament. It intervened to save Edward Snowden, who made public the whole-sale surveillance of the American public by our intelligence agencies, from extradition to the United States by helping him flee from Hong Kong *continued p.12...*



Evolution of love

It is with ourselves, first, that we must learn to live happily ever after.

As an evolving species, it is only natural that our relationships also evolve. We seek love, for it is basic to our survival. As plants turn towards the sun, so we look for the warmth of loving connections. Love is a manifestation of Life Force, and each of us has emerged from this sea of loving consciousness into three dimensional experience. Deep within each of us is the memory of that external, constant love. While merged with that oneness, the Soul experienced a profound, harmonious completion. Throughout our lifetimes, we constantly seek this completion.

The powerful maternal connection is designed to ease the transition of the Soul into physical form. The infant cries because discomfort is a new and foreign experience. When it giggles while sleeping, it is because he or she is remembering, or perhaps re-experiencing, the joyful energies felt by spirit prior to taking up residence in its tiny body.

The Soul is Love. The Essence of our being is Love. Somehow, in the confusion of moving between dimensions, an error in consciousness can occur. The error is in striving to be loved, rather than Being Love. If not corrected, a lifetime of pain and struggle ensue.

From early on we look to others to love us, in an attempt to recreate that memory of harmonious completion. We associate this with the unconditional love of the Mother rather than with our own Soul, because that is our earliest conscious memory of love. But the Mother cannot always be with us, and so we experience the pain of separation. We think we are out of love. This is like having millions in the bank, but not knowing it and begging in order to meet our most basic needs. Oblivious to our inner resources, it is easy to become dependent on others.

After the powerful experience of the Mother's love, the next big external rush comes with romantic love. Realizing that the Mother's (or parent's) love is not the eternal force vaguely recalled in the depths of consciousness, hope is revived in the form of the Lover. Ah, that we could be swept off

our feet and carried to that blissful place of eternal joy. And in some senses, we are – not because we are loved, but because we open our hearts and allow the loving energy of the Universe to come flowing through. We touch on that place of Being Love.

Unfortunately we err again, attributing that feeling to an external source, the lover. If things don't work out, or love is withdrawn, we assume that something is wrong. Either I am not lovable, or the other is not capable of love. We move into a place of judgment, either of self or other. Judgment and love are mutually exclusive.

If we are on a path of growth, gradually we awaken to the truth that no one can give what we are seeking. Not our parents, not our children, not our friends or our lovers.

The truth is that the divine and eternal love that we seek exists within us – it is inherent in our Souls. We have taken physical form to experience that Universal Oneness in this physical dimension. Yet it seems so difficult to give ourselves the unconditional loving and acceptance that we readily give our children, our friends, and our partners. It is with ourselves, first, that we must learn to live happily ever after.

The blossoming of a new love is a mirror for the joy that we could experience if we loved ourselves fully. We have paid lip service to this concept for a long time, but relationship struggles are wake-up calls to remind us that we are looking in the wrong place for fulfillment.

Is this to suggest that we can live without loving relationships? Not exactly. We will not live well without a loving relationship with ourselves. And when we have this, we no longer need the love of others.

Once we have truly learned to love and honor ourselves, there is no longer duality within us and we become living expressions of love. We are Love. When two such beings come together, there is a beautiful celebration of Souls. If we all do it, we transcend duality and create Heaven on Earth. If you go deep into the recesses of your consciousness, you may find a vague recollection that this was the plan. ◀

Gwen Randall-Young is an author and psychotherapist in private practice. To read more articles, order books or listen to audio recordings, visit www.gwen.ca, or follow her on Facebook.

...Assange from pg. 11

to Moscow. (The Snowden leaks also revealed that Assange was on a U.S. “manhunt target list.”)

The inquiry by the Spanish court is the result of a criminal complaint filed by Assange, who accuses Morales and UC Global of violating his privacy and client-attorney confidentiality rights. The WikiLeaks founder also says the firm is guilty of misappropriation, bribery and money laundering.

Morales, according to El País, “stated both verbally and in writing to a number of his employees that, despite having been hired by the government of then-Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa, he also worked ‘for the Americans,’ to whom he allegedly sent documents, videos and audios of the meetings that the Australian activist held in the embassy.”

“Despite the fact that the Spanish firm — which is headquartered in the southern city of Jerez de la Frontera — was hired by Senain, the Ecuadorian intelligence services, Morales called on his employees several times to keep his relationship with the US intelligence services a secret,” the paper reported.

“The owner of UC Global S. L. ordered a meeting between the head of the Ecuadorian secret service, Rommy Vallejo, and Assange to be spied on, at a time when they were planning the exit of Assange from the Ecuadorian embassy using a diplomatic passport in order to take him to another country,” according to El País. “This initiative was eventually rejected by Assange on the basis that he considered it to be ‘a defeat,’ that would fuel conspiracy theories, according to sources close to the company consulted by this newspaper. Morales called on his employees to keep his relationship with the US intelligence services a secret.”

The Vallejo-Assange meeting, which included Assange's lawyers, took place Dec. 21, 2017. The security firm made audio and video recordings through microphones and cameras installed in the embassy. The CIA was immediately made aware of the plan, perhaps through an “external streaming access point” installed in the embassy, according to El País. The next day the United States issued an international arrest warrant for Assange.

Microphones were implanted in fire extinguishers and a women's restroom where Assange's lawyers would cloister themselves with their client in an effort to avoid being recorded. The windows in the embassy were given a treatment that provided better audio quality for the laser microphones that the CIA was using from exterior locations, the paper reported.

When Moreno was elected to the presidency in Ecuador, replacing Rafael Correa, who had granted Assange asylum in the embassy, an intense campaign was launched to force the publisher from the embassy. It included daily harassment, cutoff of internet access and the termination of nearly all visits.

UC Global, which provides personal security for casino magnate Sheldon Adelson and protection for his company Las Vegas Sands, apparently used Adelson, a friend of President Trump and one of the largest donors to the Republican Party, to lobby the Trump administration and then-CIA Director Mike Pompeo to make Assange a priority target.

La Repubblica, like El País, obtained important files, recordings and other information stemming from the UC Global surveillance at the embassy. They include photos of Assange in the embassy and recordings of conversations he had with doctors, journalists, politicians, celebrities and members of his legal team.

“The videos and audio recordings accessed by the Repubblica reveal the extreme violations of privacy that Julian Assange, the WikiLeaks journalists, lawyers, doctors and reporters were subjected to inside the embassy, and represent a shocking case study of the impossibility of protecting journalistic sources and materials in such a hostile environment,” the Italian newspaper wrote. “This espionage operation is particularly shocking if we consider that Assange was protected by asylum, and if we consider that the information gathered will be used by the United States to support his extradition and put him in prison for the crimes for which he is currently charged and for which he risks 175 years in prison: the publication of secret US government documents revealing war crimes and torture, from Afghanistan to Iraq to Guantanamo.” ◀

Sea Shepherd's declaration of media war against BC seal hunt

In the middle of what is presently called “The 6th Extinction”, the DFO, our Ministry of Fisheries and a few westcoast First Nations individuals and Chinese Government officials are entertaining a massive west coast seal slaughter.

You would think that such an idea would not be possible in the midst of a bio-diversity collapse. We are experiencing mass extinctions at a rate greater than any witnessed since the Dinosaurs were wiped out. Yet somehow, politicians like Jonathan Wilkinson, the present Federal Environment Minister and the Former DFO minister, and our resource extraction BC NDP government are all turning a blind eye to what is happening around us.

Reduce BC's seals by 50 percent, says Ken Pearce

Ken Pearce, co-chair of the Pacific Balance Pinniped Society, said that, “the quickest way to reverse declining salmon numbers is to kill tens of thousands [of the seals], reducing their numbers by 50 per cent.”

The present population of seals and sea lions is about 200,000 from the Washington border to the Alaskan Border. In an interview with CBC, Pearce said, “they are cute, I’m the first to agree, but when you see 80,000 seals (Pearce was referring just to the Salish Sea) are they cute anymore? No, they’re a nuisance.”

Leri Davies with Fisheries and Oceans Canada confirmed that the Pacific Balance Pinniped Society submitted a proposal to commercially hunt pinnipeds under

the “New and Emerging Fisheries Policy”. Davies said the DFO takes an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries and oceans management to ensure that the best science is reflected, in consideration of the role seals play in a healthy aquatic ecosystem.

— Rod Marining, Director of Sea Shepherd Canada Conservation Society



The proposal to kill seals is simply a program to demonize and scapegoat seals for the mismanagement of the fisheries by the DFO.

Commentary by Captain Paul Watson

The Sea Shepherd Conservation Society has physically opposed the slaughter of seals and sea lions around the world since 1977 – from Newfoundland and Labrador to Namibia, Norway, Russia, Finland and Scotland. We cannot ignore any seal killing program in the place where Sea Shepherd was born: British Columbia.

The proposal to kill seals is simply a program to demonize and scapegoat seals for the mismanagement

of the fisheries by the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Seals are not a threat to the Orcas or to indigenous salmon. Salmon farms, over-fishing, logging, mining, pollution and dams are the primary threats to the Orcas. It has been scientifically proven that seals have never been a threat to fish on the East coast or the West coast. The Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) has a history of scapegoating seals and sea lions for their own incompetent and failed policies.

The DFO knows that killing seals does not benefit healthy fish populations. Seals are an important part of a healthy eco-system and killing seals can actually harm salmon and orca populations.

Seals prefer hake to salmon, and hake are serious predators of juvenile salmon. Lower seal populations unnaturally and hake populations will rise. Fishermen are always screaming about killing seals because most fishermen believe in the unscientific myth that seals are eating all of “their” fish. The DFO scientists know better but the DFO bureaucrats tend to cater to the bias of the fishing industry.

Declare a seal kill and we will come.

There are many ways to help Sea Shepherd defend, conserve and protect our precious oceans. Join a campaign on the high seas, volunteer in your hometown, help keep our shores clean and safe, or contribute the funds and equipment that keep their ships running. Visit www.seashepherdglobal.org

Warrior Up from pg. 8

shower, or wash their hands.”

She is following in the footsteps of her late great aunt, Josephine Mandamin, an internationally recognized water rights and Indigenous activist who founded Mother Earth Water Walkers. “She walked thousands of miles around the Great Lakes, more than once, inspiring and motivating me to do this work, not expecting that day to come as soon as it did,” says Peltier. “Water is the lifeblood of Mother Earth,” she tells UN delegates and everyone else who will listen. “We all have a right to this as we need it and it should not be for sale.

“What means the most to me, what I am learning and sharing, is the Sacredness of water. Nothing can survive without it. Ancestors have passed on oral knowledge that water is alive, and has a spirit.

“Our first water teaching comes from within our own mother. We literally live floating in water for nine months. Flowing within us is original water from time immemorial. Our ancestors

drank it, thousands of years before us. It evaporates and turns into mist, fog, rain, clouds and snow; can go and be anywhere, surrounding us, connecting



Ancestors have passed on oral knowledge that water is alive, and has a spirit. Nothing can survive without it.

to everything else.” Autumn Peltier first made headlines in 2016, after being invited to give a gift to Justin Trudeau. Instead she gave him a message. “I am very unhappy with the choices you’ve made endorsing pipelines, and endangering communities,” she told him publicly, through frustrated tears. “I’m

going to hold you accountable for your broken promise to provide clean water to everyone by 2021.”

The Council of Canadians notes that at any given time, at least 100 First Nations are under water advisories, including the Neskantaga First Nation where residents have been without clean drinking water for 25 years.

“Canada isn’t a third world country, but here in my country, Indigenous people live in third world conditions. Why so many boiled water advisories and why have they gone without for so long?” she asks.

Canada is also the fourth-largest producer of crude oil and the fifth-largest producer of natural gas in the world, spending billions of dollars in fossil fuel subsidies and incentives. Where climate is warming twice as fast as the rest of the world. And with 0.5 percent of the Earth’s population, where projects are being contemplated to use up nearly a third of the planet’s remaining carbon budget.

Indigenous people are vital to preventing ecological destruction and climate catastrophe. The UN’s top climate change body, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), has determined that without rights for Indigenous people, climate change will most certainly get worse.

“I’m going to be talking about water protection on a spiritual and cultural level, coming from traditional knowledge of elders, talking about what we can do, solutions on how to protect clean water and keep what water we have now safe,” Autumn Peltier insists.

“My aunt advised me: ‘Don’t let anyone stop you. And don’t care what people say, just keep on doing the work.’ So that’s exactly what I’m going to do.

“One day I will be an ancestor, and I want my descendants to know I used my voice. If you have an idea or a solution, or a way you can help, just do it.” Autumn Peltier is urging us all to “Warrior Up” and take a stand for our planet.



Climate action, conservation go together

We live on a changing planet. Unnaturally rapid global warming is altering everything, including lands and waters. Evidence shows we've already emitted enough greenhouse gases to change the structure of ecosystems and the interactions within them. Because many greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide remain in the atmosphere for hundreds of years, impacts to the planet will continue even if we stop all emissions tomorrow.

Approaches to conservation are also changing in response to climate disruption. Protected areas were initially established primarily for the benefit of people – to preserve breeding grounds for preferred game, or to optimize areas for human recreation. Over several decades, efforts have shifted toward prioritizing the ecological integrity of Canada's parks, and recognizing the role of Indigenous leadership in conservation and stewardship.

Protected areas can be excellent climate mitigation tools. Mature forests, peatlands, oceans and marshes store significant amounts of carbon; disturbing these ecosystems releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

Evidence shows Earth is heating at an accelerating rate, outpacing the capacity of numerous plant and animal species to adapt. To safeguard biodiversity, protected area planning is having to address habitat changes brought on by climate disruption.

This planning isn't new. Twenty years ago, the World Wildlife Fund produced *Buying Time: A User's Manual for Building Resistance and Resilience to Climate Change in Natural Systems*, based on the premise that strategic conservation measures could give nature breathing room until the transition to zero carbon energy was complete.

"Climate change is happening now and nature is expe-

riencing its impacts first," the report says. "Whether one looks at coral reefs, mangroves, arctic areas or montane regions, climate change poses a complex and bewildering array of problems for ecosystems. The key question is, what can be done – in addition to the rapid reduction of CO₂ emissions now – to increase the resiliency of these ecosystems to climate change?"

The WWF team developed three broad approaches: protect adequate and appropriate space, limit all non-climate stresses, and use adaptive management and strategy testing. This means maintaining functional ecosystems and keystone species, reducing stresses like chemical pollutants, fragmentation by roads and industrial activities, and regularly assessing methods and outcomes.

More recently, an article in the journal *Environmental Research Letters* explored "climate-wise connectivity," natural area connection "that specifically facilitates animal and plant movement in response to climate change." Climate-wise connectivity looks at conservation strategies amid the climate crisis as emergent ecosystems appear. These include increasing the amount of protected habitat, adding corridors between protected areas, creating small "stepping stones" of habitat, buffering areas of rapid habitat change with areas of slower change, and maintaining biologically rich hot spots.

At the heart of it, connectivity corridors linking conservation areas provide wildlife with pathways on their journeys to continued survival. The article notes that "geophysical features that create a diversity of microclimates are important to focus on as they can buffer the effects of climate change, giving species more opportunities and time to track the changing climate."

As both landscapes and our approaches to conserving them shift, so too must our social systems. Climate jus-

tice and social justice are intricately linked. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has noted climate change will continue to disproportionately affect the poor and most vulnerable – internationally and within Canada.

Humans are part of nature. We form what some social scientists call a "social-ecological system" and human resilience within that system is shaped by many factors: where we live, our relationships with the land, government support systems, and our personal economic and social resources. So we can build resilience in our own lives while supporting others less fortunate than ourselves.

Protected areas can be excellent

climate mitigation tools. Mature forests, peatlands, oceans and marshes store significant amounts of carbon.

Activism is one way to foster resilience. It can help overcome despair. As people living in Canada, we must help shift social and economic structures to advance climate and ecological resilience. This includes advocating for the establishment of protected areas as tools to maintain carbon, supporting Indigenous-led conservation initiatives, and demanding justice for those displaced or impoverished by climate change. **K**

David Suzuki is a scientist, broadcaster, author and co-founder of the David Suzuki Foundation. Written with contributions from David Suzuki Foundation Boreal Project Manager Rachel Plotkin. Learn more at www.davidsuzuki.org.

...Olson from pg. 6

online pissing matches.

The jury is still out on the long-term psychological effects of digital media, but a number of studies indicate the increased levels of anxiety among the young, and dropping indices for empathy, can be sourced in part to over-reliance on devices. Another study suggests it's not so much the content of social media that is psychologically problematic; rather, it's the amount of time it robs from real-world interactions with others.

"What does it mean to be trusted in a transparent world?" asks author Laurence Scott in a recent article for *The New York Times*. With the proliferation of surveillance technologies, we exchange

person-to-person trust for professionalized tracking. Scott gives the example of a dog-walking firm that allows customers to track their pets' walkers in real time. "The proliferation of digital surveillance software is making the elimination of unmonitored, unaccountable moments an expected part of a business's service. Without private spaces, where life occurs beyond our vision or knowledge, there is no need for trust. In an open-plan world, trustworthiness isn't so much a moral quality as a condition of not having to be trusted at all," he observes.

As our private spaces transform, so do our public spheres. In 1971, the urbanist William Whyte set up cameras to film mundane daily activities in urban spaces. From a rooftop perspec-

tive, his camera zoomed in on Americans eating their lunches, conversing, reading papers, and most notably, people watching. It makes for revelatory viewing on Youtube to see strangers, coworkers and friends so engaged with one another in public (ironically, while being "surveilled" by Whyte). Needless to say, no one in the footage is holding a magic rectangle.

"It's a cliché among political philosophers that, if you want to create the conditions for tyranny, you sever the bonds of intimate relationship and local community," observes Judith Shulevitz in a recent article in *The Atlantic*. Perhaps one day it will be considered an outrageous or even subversive act to gather in small groups to freely

exchange thoughts with no digital devices in sight.

In any case, as we slouch toward a 5G panopticon, there are still ways of making yourself less transparent to the corporate state stormsnoopers. Alter the privacy settings on your devices, use browsers like Firefox and search engines other than Google. Install software plug-ins like Ghostery, and disconnect from the more egregious social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram. Most importantly, refuse to buy into smart home "assistants" from Amazon and other giant monopolies.

Oh, and read those damn software license agreements! **K**

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Love Is the Best Religion: Gnostic teachings and meditations. 10 AM – 1 PM, BC Gnostic Centre in Mt. Pleasant, Vancouver. Info/registration gnosisbc.com 778.200.7471. Donation-based. Drop-in welcome.

FEB 21

Benefit concert for the West Moberly First Nation to stop the Site C dam. 8pm at the Russian Hall, 600 Campbell Ave., Vancouver. Donation \$20.

FEB 22 – 23

Become a Certified Life Coach or Executive Coach: Hampton Inn & Suites, Vancouver. This 2-day intensive will teach you everything you need to know to succeed. Only Certified Coaches Federation graduates earn the esteemed Certified Life Coach Practitioner designations. Register at 866-455-2155 or 403-389-1190 www.certifiedcoachesfederation.com

FEB 29 – MAR 14

Path of Self-Realization: Practical Ethics and Meditation. 3 Saturdays, begins Feb 29, 10 am to noon, BC Gnostic Centre in Mt. Pleasant, Vancouver. Info/registration gnosis@gnosisbc.com 778.200.7471. Donation-based. Drop-in welcome.

MAR 14

Talk on the Vegan Diet & Athletic Performance. 5pm. Info: www.meetup.com/MeatlessMeetup/events/

JUN 12-22

Travel - Sacred Journey Through Tibet: Join Sarah Grace & Matthew Kocel for this Pilgrimage of a Lifetime through Tibet's lands, steeped in Sacred Tradition. www.sacredjourneythroughtibet.com


THURSDAYS


Women's Sufi Circle: A Contemporary Study


of Ancient Wisdom. A time to connect with your heart, revive your spiritual being, discover hope and understand the purpose of your life. Thursdays 7-8:30pm. False Creek, Vancouver. RSVP nadia@pureintentions.net

SATURDAYS

Free Musical Jam: 8pm-midnight. British Ex Servicemen's Association, 1143 Kingsway. Kelly 778-883-9641


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